

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR BANDWIDTH  
EFFICIENT DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0022] In one embodiment, the present invention is a method and an apparatus for bandwidth efficient distribution of content over a computer network. In one embodiment, a server cooperates with clients to reduce the usage of server bandwidth, thereby reducing bandwidth-associated distribution costs. The server controls the way that content is distributed within the system, and the clients/receivers may act as intermediate forwarders of data packets. In one embodiment, this is accomplished by sending data items to a first group of receivers on a packet-by-packet basis using unicast communication. The first group of receivers then sends the packets on to a second set of receivers, and the process continues until the packet is forwarded to all intended receivers.